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ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT: COMPOSITION OF THE SECRETARIAT

Improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. As provided for in Article 8 of the Charter of the United Nations, the universal eligibility of men and women to participate in any capacity and under conditions of equality in the United Nations principal and subsidiary organs is vital to the Organization's credibility and leadership role as an advocate for improving the status of women worldwide. In the last decade, policies aimed at achieving gender equality in the United Nations global Secretariat have produced measurable gains, in terms of both the number of women working at all levels, and changes in the work environment within which they pursue their careers. In 1985, only 23.1 per cent of Professional posts subject to geographical distribution were filled by women (see A/C.5/40/30, table 1); as of 30 June 1996, the corresponding figure is 35.1 per cent. Nonetheless, the Secretary-General's guiding target of 50/50 gender distribution overall by the year 2000 appears elusive. The Secretariat is particularly far from achieving that target at policy-making and decision-making levels (D-1 and above) where the percentage of posts held by women is 17.9 per cent. The Secretary-General's target must be supported, particularly in the current context of financial crisis, by ongoing creative measures to protect established gains and fulfil equality objectives.

2. At its fiftieth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 50/164 on the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat. In that resolution, the Assembly expressed disappointment that neither of the objectives that it had established in its resolutions 45/125 of 14 December 1990 and 45/239 C of 21 December 1990 had been met (a 35 per cent overall participation rate of women in posts subject to geographical distribution by 1995 and a 25 per cent participation rate of women in posts at the D-1 level and above by 1995), and that the level of representation at the D-1 level and above remained unacceptably low. At its forty-ninth session, the Assembly had adopted resolutions 49/222 A and 49/222 B in which, inter alia, it had provided guidance and support for efforts to improve the status of women in the global Secretariat and the United Nations system of organizations. In its resolution 49/222 A, the Assembly had urged the Secretary-General to implement fully the strategic plan of action for the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (1995-2000) (A/49/587 and Corr.1, sect. IV).

3. As indicated above, the first goal established in Assembly resolutions 45/125 and 45/239 C and reaffirmed in Assembly resolution 50/164 of a 35 per cent overall participation rate of women in Professional posts subject to geographical distribution has now been achieved. However, as of 30 June 1996, the representation of women at the policy-making and decision-making levels stands at 17.9 per cent, reflecting very slow progress towards the companion goal of a 25 per cent participation rate of women. A new time-bound target for the representation of women overall in posts subject to geographical distribution should now be realistically redefined so that attention will remain focused on gender equality. In order to proceed and achieve full equality - 50/50 gender distribution overall - some intermediate minimum targets need to be set. To realize the goal of a 25 per cent representation of women in policy-making levels, continuous support for filling such posts with qualified women candidates is required both from senior managers of the Organization and

from Member States. However, the current and seemingly open-ended financial crisis faced by the United Nations has had a continuing negative impact on recruitment at all levels, diminishing opportunities for changing the balance in the foreseeable future, particularly at the policy-making and decision-making levels.

4. The present report has been prepared pursuant to Assembly resolution 222 A. It presents recent achievements and challenges over the past year in meeting prescribed gender-distribution goals. During the present time of financial constraint on the United Nations, human resource planning and managerial responsibility, continued commitment and vigilance, and enforceable and effective measures are particularly necessary to secure present gains and achieve continuing progress, even if modest.

II. MEASURABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

A. Women in posts subject to geographical distribution, by level and department

5. As part of the Organization's efforts to improve the status of women, the Office of Human Resources Management of the United Nations Secretariat prepares monthly monitoring tables on the status of women in the Secretariat and distributes them to the Steering Committee for the Improvement of the Status of Women in the Secretariat. The tables cover the gender distribution of staff in the United Nations Secretariat by department or office, as well as by grade for Professional and higher-level staff in posts subject to geographical distribution; they provide data on the Assistant Secretary-General and Under-Secretary-General levels, the D-2 and higher levels, the D-1 and higher levels, and P-5 and higher-level staff in posts subject to geographical distribution.

6. Table 1 shows that the percentage of women in posts subject to geographical distribution stands at 35.1 as of 30 June 1996, compared with a percentage of 23.1 in 1985 (see A/C.5/40/30, table 1), an increase of 12 per cent in the last 11 years. Table 2 shows the progression of the status of women in the last three years. Although there has been some increase in the number of Professional women in the Secretariat - since the middle of 1994 the percentage of women has increased by 2.3 per cent - the hiring freeze, which began in September 1995, has clearly taken away one of the major tools of the Organization to implement gender equality. Furthermore, as a result of a concerted effort by the Office of Human Resources Management working with programme managers, statistics show that women have not been disproportionately affected by the early separation programmes of 1995 and 1996. The number of Professional staff separated under those programmes was 89, of whom one third were women. Under the early separation programme for 1995, of 57 Professional staff members approved 21 were women and 36 were men; under the programme for 1996, of 32 Professionals 8 were women and 24 were men. Since two thirds of those separated were men, new opportunities for the upward mobility of women have become available.

7. Table 1 indicates the gender distribution, by department, of Secretariat staff in posts subject to geographical distribution. Of the 31 departments and offices reviewed, 15 have achieved or surpassed the goal of 35 per cent women overall in posts subject to geographical distribution; nine have reached over 25 per cent women; four departments and offices have not yet reached 25 per cent women; and three have reached 50 per cent or more women in Professional posts (table 1). In addition, three departments have reached or surpassed 50 per cent women in posts D-1 and above (see table 3). As a follow-up to a decision made at the Fourth World Conference on Women to mainstream gender issues into all programmes and aspects of the United Nations, it is expected that an end to the financial crisis would provide opportunities to recruit more women for previously male-dominated areas, thus eliminating the exclusion of women from certain occupations.

Table 1. Gender distribution of staff in the United Nations Secretariat, by department or office and grade: Professional and higher-level staff in posts subject to geographical distribution, as of 30 June 1996

Department/ Office	USG		ASG		D-2		D-1		P-5		P-4		P-3		P-2		P-1		Total		Grand total	% of women
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
DAM	1					1	3	2	4	3	2	6	2	3	2	2			14	17	31	54.8
DAM/OHRM			1		1	2	1	3	6	8	10	13	11	9	6	6			36	41	77	53.2
INTORG									2		1	2				1			3	3	6	50.0
DPI			1		4	2	13	5	19	13	32	32	37	45	25	31			131	128	259	49.4
DPCSD	1				2	2	10	2	14	8	11	15	5	10	4	7			47	44	91	48.4
UNSPF							2		5	2	3	6	8	6		1			18	15	33	45.5
UNEP		1				2	1			2	6	1	1		3	3			11	9	20	45.0
DAM/OPPBA			1		4		5		8	10	11	9	14	14	8	7			51	40	91	44.0
UNHCR	1		1				2		6	2	11	8	8	9	4	6			33	25	58	43.1
DDSMS	1				2	1	6	1	13	7	17	14	9	10	1	4			49	37	86	43.0
UNOG	1				2		7	2	4	7	12	4	19	12	10	13			55	38	93	40.9
DCP	1				2		1		7	1	6	8	7	3	3	6			27	18	45	40.0
DPA	1		2		8	1	10	5	21	11	22	15	14	14	6	6			84	52	136	38.2
OLA	1				5		7		10	9	8	7	9	7	9	7			49	30	79	38.0
OIOS	1				1		2	1	7	1	11	8	8	3	1	5			31	18	49	36.7
DESIPA	1				2		11	2	11	8	24	14	23	9	11	9			83	42	125	33.6
DAM/OCSS			1		3		12	4	15	8	23	12	25	14	12	8			91	46	137	33.6
DPKO	1		2		3		8	1	7	2	20	8	8	13	4	2			53	26	79	32.9
SG	2		1	1	2		2	2	3	2	2		3	1	2	2			17	8	25	32.0
ESCWA	1					1	4		12	2	22	5	7	7	4	7			50	22	72	30.6
ESCAP	1					1	9	3	21	2	32	12	21	8	9	14			93	40	133	30.1
ECLAC	1						10	2	17	6	34	8	24	13	15	9			101	38	139	27.3
DHA	1				4		7		11	2	6	2	1	4	3	4			33	12	45	26.7
UNOV					2		3	2	7	2	12	4	12	4	2	1			38	13	51	25.5
REGCOM							1	1	1		1								3	1	4	25.0
UNCHS			1		2		2	1	4	1	11	4	10	4	4	1			34	11	45	24.4
ECE	1					1	5	2	15	1	18	6	17	6	12	4			68	20	88	22.7
UNCTAD	1				3		22	1	39	6	36	8	40	21	16	10			157	46	203	22.7
ECA	1				1		7	1	33	3	37	8	37	14	12	10			128	36	164	22.0
DPKO/FALD			3		2		6		14	1	5	1	7	2	2	2			39	6	45	13.3
UNCC					2		1		1		1								5	0	5	0.0
UNSCOM																			0	0	0	
TOTAL	20	1	14	1	57	14	180	43	337	130	447	240	387	265	190	188			1 632	882	2 514	35.1

Table 2. Gender distribution of staff in the United Nations Secretariat in posts subject to geographical distribution, 1994, 1995 and 1996

	30 June 1994				30 June 1995				30 June 1996			
Level	Women	Men	Total	% Women	Women	Men	Total	% Women	Women	Men	Total	% Women
USG	2	17	19	10.53	2	18	20	10.0	1	20	21	4.8
ASG	2	16	18	11.11	2	12	14	14.3	1	14	15	6.7
D-2	14	61	75	18.67	14	58	72	19.4	14	57	71	19.7
D-1	34	198	232	14.66	39	188	227	17.2	43	180	223	19.3
P-5	122	375	497	24.55	136	345	481	28.3	130	337	467	27.8
P-4	246	481	727	33.84	234	460	694	33.7	240	447	687	34.9
P-3	240	371	611	39.28	250	379	629	39.7	265	387	652	40.6
P-2	168	201	369	45.53	180	198	378	47.6	188	190	378	49.7
P-1	2	0	2	100.00	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0
Total	830	1 720	2 550	32.55	857	1 658	2 515	34.1	882	1 632	2 514	35.1

Source: Previous reports of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat (A/49/527 and A/50/540) and data provided by the Office of Human Resources of the United Nations Secretariat.

Table 3. Gender distribution of staff in the United Nations Secretariat, by department or office and grade: D-1 and higher-level staff in posts subject to geographical distribution, as of 30 June 1996

Department/ office	USG		ASG		D-2		D-1		Total		Grand total	% of Women
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F		
UNEP		1				2	1		1	3	4	75.0
DAM/OHRM			1		1	2	1	3	3	5	8	62.5
REGCOM							1	1	1	1	2	50.0
DAM	1					1	3	2	4	3	7	42.9
ECE	1					1	5	2	6	3	9	33.3
SG	2		1	1	2		2	2	7	3	10	30.0
ESCAP	1					1	9	3	10	4	14	28.6
UNOV					2		3	2	5	2	7	28.6
DPI			1		4	2	13	5	18	7	25	28.0
DPCSD	1				2	2	10	2	13	4	17	23.5
DPA	1		2		8	1	10	5	21	6	27	22.2
OIOS	1				1		2	1	4	1	5	20.0
DAM/OCSS			1		3		12	4	16	4	20	20.0
DDSMS	1				2	1	6	1	9	2	11	18.2
ESCWA	1					1	4		5	1	6	16.7
UNOG	1				2		7	2	10	2	12	16.7
UNCHS			1		2		2	1	5	1	6	16.7
ECLAC	1						10	2	11	2	13	15.4
DESIPA	1				2		11	2	14	2	16	12.5
ECA	1				1		7	1	9	1	10	10.0
DPKO	1		2		3		8	1	14	1	15	6.7
UNCTAD	1				3		22	1	26	1	27	3.7
OLA	1				5		7		13	0	13	0.0
DHA	1				4		7		12	0	12	0.0
DCP	1				2		1		4	0	4	0.0
DAM/OPPBA			1		4		5		10	0	10	0.0
UNJSPF							2		2	0	2	0.0
UNHCR	1		1				2		4	0	4	0.0
UNCC					2		1		3	0	3	0.0
DPKO/FALD			3		2		6		11	0	11	0.0
INTORG									0	0	0	
UNSCOM									0	0	0	
Total	20	1	14	1	57	14	180	43	271	59	330	17.9

B. Women in posts subject to special language requirements

8. As shown in table 4, the percentage of women in posts subject to special language requirements was 35.3 on 30 June 1995 and 36.3 as of 30 June 1996. However, the staffing complement of certain language services still consists predominantly of male staff (see table 5). It should be noted that for those countries that have low representation of women in posts subject to geographical distribution, the same pattern exists in their respective language units. Posts with special language requirements range from levels P-1 to P-5 inclusive. At the D-1 level and above, such posts are subject to geographical distribution because of the degree of managerial responsibility and functions attached to them. Had the target of 35 per cent overall included posts subject to special language requirements, the Secretariat would have met a 35-per-cent representation level for 1995 and 1996.

Table 4. Gender distribution of staff in posts with special language requirements, by grade, 1995 and 1996

	30 June 1995				30 June 1996			
Level	Women	Men	Total	% Women	Women	Men	Total	% Women
P-5	39	91	130	30.0	48	91	139	34.5
P-4	126	231	357	35.3	120	231	351	34.2
P-3	121	237	358	33.8	127	226	353	36.0
P-2	31	23	54	57.4	32	26	58	55.2
P-1	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0
Total	317	582	899	35.3	327	574	901	36.3

Table 5. Gender distribution of staff in posts with special language requirements, by region and grade, as of 30 June 1996

Region	P-5		P-4		P-3		P-2		P-1		Total		Total staff
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	
Africa	4	15	6	45	10	32	3	1	0	0	23	93	116
Asia and the Pacific	4	14	8	38	16	50	3	4	0	0	31	106	137
Eastern Europe	0	17	2	48	2	83	1	4	0	0	5	152	157
Western Europe	25	23	63	56	44	23	12	9	0	0	144	111	255
Latin America	9	9	16	12	16	13	3	4	0	0	44	38	82
Middle East	0	6	2	9	6	10	1	1	0	0	9	26	35
North America and the Caribbean	6	6	20	20	31	14	8	3	0	0	65	43	108
Others	0	1	3	3	2	1	1	0	0	0	6	5	11
Total	48	91	120	231	127	226	32	26	0	0	327	574	901

C. Promotion

9. The strict application and monitoring of the special measures set forth in administrative instruction ST/AI/412 of 5 January 1996 on special measures for the achievement of gender equality have yielded a promotion rate of 41.3 per cent for women over the past year (see table 6). The special measures require that due regard be paid to improving the status of women even when financial crises or measures lead to periods of downsizing and/or a freeze on recruitment.

Table 6. Gender distribution of Professional staff promoted through the appointment and promotion bodies to the P-3 to D-1 levels, 30 June 1995 to 30 June 1996

Levels	Men	Women	Percentage of Women	Total
D-1	14	8	36.36	22
P-5	35	20	36.36	55
P-4	38	26	40.63	64
P-3	28	27	49.09	55
Total	115	81	41.32	196

Source: Office of Human Resources Management of the United Nations Secretariat.

D. Appointments

10. In the Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/278 of 14 September 1995 on the financial situation of the Organization, the Secretary-General decided, among other measures, to implement a freeze on recruitment until the financial situation of the Organization improves substantially. Recruitment, one of the main tools for improving the percentage of women in the Professional category, especially at D-1 levels and above, has been drastically slowed during the financial crisis. Since there is no critical mass of women at the middle levels, the ability to use promotion as a tool for reaching the targets set by the General Assembly is limited, further affecting the Secretary-General's goal of achieving gender balance within the established time-frame. Thus, the Secretariat does not have the necessary opportunities to improve gender balance as fast as the Secretary-General wishes.

III. FRAMEWORK TO SUPPORT GENDER EQUALITY, INCLUDING THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE STATUS OF WOMEN

A. Consolidation of special measures for the achievement of gender equality

11. Administrative instruction ST/AI/412 of 5 January 1996 on special measures for the achievement of gender equality consolidates in a streamlined format all existing measures dispensed over the last 10 years in bulletins, administrative instructions and other policy issuances on achieving gender balance, and provides the framework for monitoring the status of women in departments and offices. In its resolution 49/222 B, the General Assembly noted with appreciation the statement on the status of women in the secretariats of the United Nations system adopted by the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) at its first regular session of 1995. The Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/282 of 5 January 1996 on policies to achieve gender equality in the United Nations was issued concurrently with administrative instruction ST/AI/412. The bulletin will facilitate the monitoring of the status of women, as well as give impetus to efforts to realize the Secretary-General's goal of gender equality by the year 2000. However, the United Nations is still unable to implement many of those measures due to the constraints created by the financial crisis, such as its inability to recruit new staff. Summarized below are the principal measures that the Office of Human Resources Management has adopted in its plan for the improvement of the status of women:

(a) Whenever the Secretary-General has found it necessary to impose a recruitment freeze, requests for exceptions to the freeze shall be considered in a more favourable light if the recommended candidate is a woman;

(b) Vacancies in the category and level of posts falling short of target figures set by the General Assembly shall be filled, when there are one or more female candidates, by a female candidate provided that (a) her qualifications meet all the requirements for the vacant post and (b) her qualifications are substantially equal or superior to those of competing male candidates;

(c) When a woman candidate matches requirements for a vacancy and a department recommends a male candidate, a written analysis must be submitted by the department indicating the basis for the selection;

(d) Except for posts filled through competitive examination, foreseeable vacancies that occur may not be filled by a male candidate until the Office of Human Resources Management has certified that, despite the best efforts of all concerned for a period of at least six months, no qualified woman candidate has been identified;

(e) Women who have been in the service of the Organization including United Nations funds and programmes, for at least one year, under any type of appointment or as consultants, can apply for United Nations internal vacancy announcements;

(f) Vacancies for posts at the P-5 level and above in departments that do not have gender equality must be advertised internally and externally (except when the Office of Human Resources Management has waived requirement for external announcement, as when a qualified woman candidate has been identified);

(g) If any candidate is to be recruited over the normal maximum desirable range for a given country, such exceptions should be made only for women, in limited cases, in relation to posts for which they are the best qualified candidates;

(h) In order to expand the pool of women available for recruitment at the lower Professional levels, exceptionally well-qualified women serving under short-term appointments or appointments of less than one year at the P-2 or P-3 levels and encumbering an established post may, on a limited basis, be allowed to take the competitive examination even though they are nationals of Member States above the mid-point of their desirable range or nationals of overrepresented Member States;

(i) Whenever assignments against a higher-level post temporarily become available, all departments and offices are requested to undertake a review of their qualified women staff for temporary placement against such functions;

(j) A formal monitoring process has been established within the Office of the Focal Point for Women to ensure that women are not disproportionately affected during the financial crisis;

(k) The rules on seniority are to be flexibly applied so that the cumulative seniority of a woman staff member is considered for the purposes of regular and accelerated promotion.

B. Special Adviser on Gender Issues

12. Following the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 4-15 September 1995) and in response to a recommendation of the Conference, the Secretary-General has designated one of his special advisers as his Special Adviser on Gender Issues. In that capacity, the Special Adviser assists the

Secretary-General in ensuring that the gender perspective is effectively integrated into policies and programmes in all areas of work in the United Nations system, working together with the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), the Office of the Focal Point for Women in the United Nations Secretariat and other concerned units within the United Nations system. In line with that mandate and in order to ensure better coordination among the various components of the system, in consultation with the programmes and funds of the United Nations system, the Special Adviser has, on an informal basis, established three working groups with the participation of the United Nations Secretariat and some funds and programmes of the United Nations system. The working groups cover policy and research, operational activities, and gender balance throughout the United Nations system, and have already carried out some preliminary work in identifying areas of action. The groups are expected to merge with any task-oriented working groups that the Inter-Agency Committee on Women (see para. 15 below) may decide to establish. Their activities could then be taken up within that wider framework.

C. Steering Committee on the Improvement of the Status of Women in the Secretariat

13. The Steering Committee on the Improvement of the Status of Women in the Secretariat was established by the Secretary-General on 7 March 1986, as part of an overall programme to overcome the main obstacles to women's integration into the substantive work of the Organization. The Committee is chaired by the Special Adviser on Gender Issues to the Secretary-General, and is composed of 16 members selected in their personal capacities by the Secretary-General from various departments and offices. The Focal Point for Women in the Secretariat is an ex officio member and the Secretary of the Committee. The Committee monitors the implementation of the strategic plan of action for the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (1995-2000); advises and makes recommendations to the Secretary-General on policies for the advancement of women; and reports to the Secretary-General on a yearly basis.

Local steering committees

14. Some regional commissions have or are in the process of setting up steering committees and some, such as the Economic Commission for Africa, have had such committees in the past. In April 1995, the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna, upon the recommendation of the Joint Advisory Committee, established the Vienna Committee for the Improvement of the Status of Women to help achieve gender goals. The Committee acts in an advisory capacity to the Director-General, and communicates to the Steering Committee in New York its findings and recommendations.

D. Administrative Committee on Coordination

15. In 1995, the members of ACC reaffirmed their strong commitment to ensuring that the advancement of women was a policy priority within the organizations of the common system, and to taking the necessary measures to improve the status of women in their respective secretariats. ACC recognized that a concerted effort had to be made to implement existing policies fully, as well as to develop new initiatives to increase the participation of women, especially at senior levels. In addition, at its first regular session of 1996, ACC established the Inter-Agency Committee on the Advancement on Women, to be chaired by the Special Adviser on Gender Issues to the Secretary-General. The mandate of the Committee is to monitor, on the basis of performance indicators, the implementation by the United Nations system of the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women and gender-related recommendations emanating from recent United Nations conferences and summits within the purview of the system, and to advise ACC on ways and means of ensuring effective cooperation and coordination of the United Nations system in that regard and in support of mainstreaming gender equality in the work of the United Nations system. In order to facilitate and monitor its work in that area, ACC requested that its Consultative Committee on Advisory Questions report to it at regular intervals on the implementation of the measures it had initiated to increase the participation of women. That review is currently under way and a report will be submitted to ACC at its second regular session of 1996.

E. Office of the Focal Point for Women in the Secretariat

16. The Focal Point for Women continues to report directly to the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management and to function as an integral part of his immediate office and the Office of Human Resources Management as a whole. Her main functions are as follows:

(a) To monitor the implementation and progress of the strategic plan of action for the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (1995-2000), as endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolutions 49/222 A and 50/164;

(b) To communicate, network and advocate within the United Nations common system on gender issues to ensure that the United Nations and outside institutions fully benefit from lessons learned in addressing gender issues at the workplace;

(c) To intervene in the placement and promotion processes to ensure that women are given every opportunity to be placed and promoted into posts for which they are qualified;

(d) To intervene in recruitment processes to ensure that greater numbers of qualified women are recruited, in particular at the senior decision-making levels;

(e) To provide reports and attend deliberations of the General Assembly on the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat, and also to provide

secretariat services to the Steering Committee on the Improvement of the Status of Women in the Secretariat and others, as necessary;

(f) To provide counsel and guidance to women staff members who seek her assistance with their careers, and advise them on their rights and responsibilities.

17. The Focal Point for Women works closely with the Office of Human Resources Management to build a more supportive and encouraging work environment in order to further the targets set by the General Assembly. In addition, the Focal Point tries to generate better communication among all staff. Special events that would bring women and men together to discuss issues of mutual concern are also planned.

18. On 25 April 1996, the Focal Point organized the "Take your daughters to work day", in cooperation with the Staff Committee and the Group on Equal Rights for Women. The activities of the day were designed to provide young women with the opportunity to see their mothers and/or fathers at work and to see at first hand the role that women play in the Organization and the opportunities open to them for future leadership roles.

19. The activities of the Office of the Focal Point continue to be financed through extrabudgetary sources. Current staff resources - for one Principal Officer and one General Service-level staff member - are extremely limited in view of the workload related to the implementation and monitoring of the plan of action, as well as the follow up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and the new ACC Inter-Agency Committee on Women. In its resolution 49/222 A, the General Assembly urged Member States to make voluntary contributions to support the efforts of the United Nations in bringing about gender equality. Bringing gender equality to the United Nations is a responsibility to be shared by Member States with the United Nations and to be shared by the Office of Human Resources Management with other departments. Appointment promotion bodies, for example, have been supportive (see table 5). In order to reach gender equality the work environment needs to be improved. To that end, gender sensitivity has been incorporated in the Performance Appraisal System as well as in the People Management Training Programme. In addition, to offset limited staffing resources the Focal Point has availed herself of the Internship Programme.

Departmental focal points

20. A network of departmental focal points, functioning since 1994, assists the Focal Point for Women in the Secretariat. The departmental focal points, in addition to their regular duties, work with department heads and chiefs of administration and/or executive offices to monitor policy implementation and alert the Focal Point to problems encountered by women in their respective departments. The departmental focal points are chosen by the heads of departments and offices for a two-year term, in consultation with staff representatives, taking into account their demonstrated interest and commitment to improving the status of women in the Secretariat. The departmental focal points support and work in close cooperation with the Focal Point for Women in the Secretariat.

F. Discrimination, including harassment

21. Although harassment is not a gender issue per se, the Focal Point for Women in the Secretariat serves as an adviser to the Joint Advisory Committee Task Force on Harassment, which works to identify and deal with the problem of harassment, including sexual harassment, in the workplace. With extrabudgetary and consultant support, the joint staff/management Task Force has prepared a questionnaire for desk-to-desk distribution at all duty stations of the global United Nations Secretariat. The survey will explore how culture and gender influence the definition of harassment in the United Nations workplace, and will assess the degree to which United Nations staff perceive harassment in its various forms to exist in their work environment. The new data will be used to help with the re-examination and strengthening of existing procedures for dealing with harassment in the United Nations workplace.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION OF GENDER GOALS

22. The consolidated special measures give practical effect to the Secretary-General's goal of achieving gender balance in the Secretariat. The aim of those measures is to give women the opportunity to compete on a more equal footing with their male counterparts for promotion and placement opportunities, until the goals of gender equality are reached. The terms of the measures are clear; their effectiveness will depend not only on the participation of all offices and departments but on monitoring their performance and, wherever possible, taking the necessary action to enforce the measures. In coordination with other units of the Office of Human Resources Management, the Focal Point, together with the Steering Committee, endeavour to facilitate and monitor the implementation of the special measures, through procedures that emphasize the importance of both providing equal opportunity for women and recognizing the additional perspective that women contribute to the work of the Organization.

23. Once regular recruitment resumes, the Office of Human Resources Management will facilitate the recruitment and advancement of women through broad networking, contacts made at conferences with women delegates, and communication with technical associations, as well as by upgrading the internal and external rosters of women and, when financially viable, through broad advertising in newspapers and journals with women as their target audience. The Focal Point for Women has established a growing network of women both inside and outside the Organization for the purposes of communication and circulation of vacancy announcements.

A. Follow-up to the strategic plan of action for the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (1995-2000): key actions by the Office of Human Resources Management, in collaboration with the Office of the Focal Point for Women in the Secretariat

24. The Office of Human Resources Management has developed a fourfold strategy to support the implementation of administrative instruction ST/AI/412. Under its strategy, the Office will endeavour to assist all offices and departments in the realization of the measures set forth in the instruction. To that end, the Office of the Focal Point will:

I.

(a) Meet regularly with department heads, programme managers, executive officers and middle-level executives to ensure that there is a constant dialogue on the improvement of the status of women in the global Secretariat;

(b) Meet with members of the Steering Committee for the Improvement of the Status of Women, members of the appointment promotion bodies, Office of Human Resources Management clusters, departmental focal points and staff representatives to keep them informed of most recent developments;

(c) Design and implement an aggressive and proactive search system, in consultation with Member States, that employs recruitment networking, executive search, and posting of vacancies on the Internet to expand the pool of qualified women candidates. In particular, attend international meetings and conferences to open new avenues for contacts with women professionals in their fields;

II.

(d) Monitor the appointment and promotion processes to ensure that women are nominated, and assist all departments and offices in identifying women candidates, both within and outside of the Organization, who meet the qualifications for any vacant post;

(e) Ensure that every effort is made to identify qualified women staff members for promotions, including accelerated promotions where the circumstances so warrant;

(f) Develop and establish a human resources database that will reflect more accurately the experience gained by women, including the educational credentials and training received during the last 10 years of service within the United Nations and/or with other organizations;

(g) Report on a quarterly basis to the Secretary-General on the status of women, addressing copies to the chairs of the appointment and promotion bodies, and the Senior Review Group;

III.

(h) Ensure that all women throughout the United Nations Secretariat are well-informed on administrative instruction ST/AI/412 and its implications for their career development;

(i) Utilize effectively the six-months vacancy forecasts to plan, outreach and network so that a larger number of women candidates can be identified;

(j) Meet with individual staff members to discuss their contractual status, personal situation and career paths, and take follow-up action, as necessary and appropriate;

(k) Communicate regularly with the staff at large through a quarterly newsletter and a column in the Secretariat News with the dual objective of informing and educating staff on important issues concerning gender;

IV.

(l) Work to create a workplace in which gender equality is valued and respected, and try to bring about a work environment that allows women to reach their full potential;

(m) Develop strategies for building greater trust and more open communication between the Office of Human Resources Management, management and the staff at large;

(n) Develop communication strategies and bring about gender sensitivity through such programmes as people management programmes in order to bring about the attitudinal changes necessary for a better work environment;

(o) Network and outreach with non-governmental organizations, educational institutions and other bodies to provide information on progress made in the Secretariat.

25. Management commitment is the key to the achievement of gender equality, in particular at the highest levels. While the overall proportion of women has increased in most departments and offices, the number of women in senior and policy-making positions still remains well below the targets set by the General Assembly and the Secretary-General. A concerted effort needs to be made by both management and by Member States to implement existing policies, as well as to develop new initiatives to increase the participation of women at senior levels. Some of the measures highlighted above, such as networking within both the United Nations system and outside institutions active on gender issues, will help to identify qualified women for senior-level vacancies once recruitment resumes. In addition, continued dialogue with universities, non-governmental organizations and professional women associations will assist in rostering women for future vacancies, allowing the Office of Human Resources Management a more dynamic response to departments and offices in their search for qualified women candidates.

B. New management culture

26. An important goal of the Secretary-General's strategy for modernizing the management of the human resources of the Organization is to develop in the Secretariat a new management culture that truly values diversity and is conducive to having all staff members contribute to their maximum potential. Establishing that new culture will require changes in attitudes as well as in systems and policies.

27. The introduction of the new Performance Appraisal System has been an important initiative in that regard. The System, which strongly encourages all staff members and their managers to jointly set goals and agree upon performance dimensions on which to base an annual appraisal, includes gender sensitivity as a mandatory managerial responsibility, which will help to promote greater accountability in such areas as achieving gender balance and demonstrating gender and culture sensitivity in the workplace.

28. Since training is a critical factor in promoting attitudinal change, gender issues are increasingly being incorporated into the Secretariat's programmes of training and staff development, including the orientation programme for new staff joining the Secretariat; training in the Performance Appraisal System; conflict resolution; and supervision and management training.

29. A mandatory programme of people management training is being implemented top-down, starting with all staff at the D-1 and D-2 levels. In order to improve the gender balance and support measures to enhance the status of women in the Secretariat, women at the P-5 level who have managerial responsibilities have been included with the directors in the first phase of the training. Gender issues are dealt with in the programme and in the follow-up sessions through the use of case studies that raise gender issues and promote their discussion.

30. Another important element of the Secretary-General's human resources strategy is the implementation of more systematic training and career support for staff from the time they first join the Organization. Starting in January 1997, that programme will include a mandatory orientation programme to introduce all entry-level Professionals recruited through the competitive examination process, over 50 per cent of whom are women, to the work of the Organization, its policies, practices and culture. A new system of managed assignment will also help to ensure that young Professional staff are able to acquire a broader range of experience early in their careers.

31. Since the new management culture must also encourage and support a workplace more conducive to the realities of the lives of women working for the Organization, issues such as the working environment, spouse employment, flexible working hours, child-care arrangements and career-break schemes will be more thoroughly explored.

V. CONCLUSION

32. Over the last decade, the United Nations has pursued various measures and programmes to bring about gender equality and improvement of the status of General Service staff, the majority of whom are women. The goals set for the equal representation of men and women are important not only in terms of numbers but also for the recognition of the value added by a diversified, gender-balanced and representative workforce. Decisions need to be made with the essential and unique perspective that women bring to the workplace. The Secretary-General's firm commitment to achieving gender equality has translated into several important decisions to improve the status of women in the Secretariat. Statistics show an increase in the number of women at all levels of representation, while the United Nations work environment has adapted to promote and safeguard the value of a workforce equally open to qualified men and women. The guiding target of achieving equality in gender distribution overall by the year 2000, however, remains elusive.

33. In some areas, particularly at higher levels, the representation of women is still very low. The Secretary-General and Member States must continue to work together to ensure that qualified women are identified and given the opportunity to serve in senior positions in the Secretariat. Together, they must champion the vision of a workforce capable of growing professionally and in which all individuals can contribute fully to the Organization without hindrance. Women are 51 per cent of the global population and must be allowed to contribute fully to the Organization if the United Nations is to represent the world in all its diversity.

34. The Secretary-General will continue to vigorously pursue the goals set by the General Assembly with respect to the improvement of the status of women. The target of 35 per cent overall representation for women in posts subject to geographical distribution has now been achieved. In view of the continued financial crisis the goal of 50/50 gender distribution by the year 2000 is not realistic. The General Assembly, therefore, may wish to set more realistic targets for women in posts subject to geographical distribution, such as 37 per cent by 1997 and 41 per cent by 1999. While the target set of 25 per cent for women in senior decision-making levels has not been achieved, it should continue to be a guiding factor. The ongoing search of the Organization for gender equality and other efforts to bring about a more diverse and equitable geographical representation should not be considered conflicting. In fact, they should be complementary and should be pursued together as a mutually beneficial goal.

35. The next century should find the United Nations at the forefront of gender issues. Member States need to collaborate with the United Nations and demonstrate their commitment to gender equality. They need to identify the means and resources for reaching those objectives. Although the financial crisis has made it extremely difficult to meet the numerical targets the Organization has set, the Secretariat will make every effort to make the work environment one that will harness the energies of women to work side by side with their male colleagues to find creative approaches to addressing the issues of the international community. A work environment that is satisfying and full of opportunities for women and men to pursue their career with optimism, work ethics and professional loyalties can only serve to renew and invigorate the global Secretariat in the service of the international community.